

LAB CHIEFS MEETING

April 15, 1996

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Dr. Edward Korn. All Lab/Branch Chiefs were present except for Dr. Balaban and Dr. Burg, who was represented by Dr. Ken Spring. Also present were Mr. Soclof and Mr. Hanson.

Guests: Dr. Don Fox and Mr. John Witt gave a presentation on the Clinical Center Essential Maintenance and Safety Utility Renovations project. The program mission is to "extend the life of the original Clinical Center 15 years and maintain a safe and healthy environment for biomedical research until a replacement facility can be constructed". A handout which summarizes the presentation was distributed to attendees.

Dr. Cynthia Dunbar, Hematology Branch, gave a presentation on her current research.

1. Outside Activities/Official Duty Activities: Dr. Korn summarized the differences between these two categories of activities. The criteria for determining whether an activity is "outside" or official is not based on whether you are paid but on how closely it is related to your current "official duty work".

2. Animal Research Protocols - The revised policy states that new protocols will not be implemented until it has been determined by Drs. Hoyt and Korn that adequate caging is available. This is in addition to approval by the Animal Care and Use Committee. Also, and for the same reason, collaborations with other ICDs that ultimately will utilize NHLBI resources for housing animals (for example, knockout or transgenic experiments) must not be initiated without approval of Dr. Korn. Lab Chiefs and PIs using animals will have to do more long-range planning before initiating certain kinds of animal research. The hope is that it will be possible to continue to support all animal research but resources are finite and needs continue to expand.

3. Annual Reports - Consistent with the common understanding that the Principal Investigator is the individual to whom the resources have been committed, the Scientific Directors have agreed that only tenured and tenure-track scientists should be identified as the "Principal Investigators" on Annual Reports. The ICDs commit resources (and scientific independence) only to tenured and tenure-track scientists. When justified, others may be listed as co-PIs. The concept of a PI is different than and unrelated to the concepts of "first author" or "senior author" of a manuscript.

4. Termination of Postdoctoral Trainees - Postdoctoral trainees are usually, but not always, given an initial appointment of two years with one year renewals, up to 5 years or, with special exception, up to 8 years. All time at the NIH is counted, irrespective of the mechanism or source of funding. The trainee should be given approximately 12 months to find another position. Because of the 5/8-year policy, from now on every postdoctoral trainee beginning the 5th year will receive a letter from Dr. Korn stating that this is the final year, unless a special exception has been requested and approved. Dr. Korn distributed a memo, summarizing the importance of discussions between the trainees and their mentors during the fourth year at NIH, if not sooner. Dr. Korn asked the Lab/Branch Chiefs to review the attachment which was an individual list for each Lab/Branch of trainees in their 4th year or later postdoctoral year at the NIH and to determine its accuracy. Dr. Korn will send appropriate memos to the trainees.

Except under special circumstances, every effort should also be made to give 11-12 months notice to trainees whose appointments will be ended earlier than the original termination date.

5. Promotion and Tenure Procedures - For everyone's clarification, Dr. Korn summarized the promotion process to grades GS-12 and above. The Lab/Branch Chief sends a memo to the Scientific Director (SD) requesting the promotion which, if not disapproved at that stage by the SD, is forwarded to the NHLBI Promotion and Tenure Committee which advises the SD on all promotions of scientists to GS-12 and above. The SD has final approval authority for promotions to GS-12. Promotions to GS-13 through GS-15 must also be approved by the Director, NHLBI, and the Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH.

NHLBI now has 10 tenure-track scientists. Conversion to tenure is initiated by a memo from the Lab/Branch Chief to Dr. Korn and, unless he disagrees, the scientist is reviewed by the NHLBI Promotion and Tenure Committee which makes its recommendation to Dr. Korn. If Dr. Korn agrees with a recommendation to convert to tenure, the request is then forwarded to Dr. Lenfant for concurrence and then to the NIH Tenure Committee before final approval by the Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH.

Dr. Korn noted that, even though the Lab/Branch Chief is requested to submit names of references to the NHLBI Promotion and Tenure Committee, it is the Committee's prerogative to decide from whom to request letters of recommendation. Suggested names should be national and international leaders in the scientific field of the candidate and it would be helpful to the Committee to identify any relationships between the suggested references and the candidate.

6. Authorized Users for Radioactive Material - Dr. Korn told attendees that he is now requiring that every tenured and tenure-track scientist in DIR be certified by the Radiation

Safety Branch as an authorized user. Individual lists regarding authorized users in each Lab/Branch were distributed for review and correction. The most up- to-date information regarding authorized users and those persons assigned to them is being obtained from Radiation Safety. Dr. Korn will request Radiation Safety to provide more training opportunities.

7. Requests for Support of Permanent Resident (Green Card) Applications - An increasing number of requests for letters of support for non-NIH scientists requesting permanent resident status or other changes in visa status are being received by NIH staff. Dr. Korn suggested that, before writing such a letter, one may want to seek the advice of Ms. Sylvia Funk, FIC. In any case, it is inappropriate to write such a letter on NIH letterhead and it should be made clear that one is supporting the application as a private individual and not in one's official capacity. Often, what the applicant needs is an official letter from a government agency stating that granting the new visa status is in the nation's interest.

8. Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) - This program was discussed previously (see February, 1996 minutes); Dr. Ken Spring, DIR representative on the NHLBI Committee, gave an update on this program. Guidelines for intramural staff are being developed and hopefully will be available by the next Lab Chiefs' meeting. In summary, the proposals must be for a project which will lead to development of a product which can be sold by the company which receives the contract. Proposals should be submitted by early June for announcement in September. They will be reviewed in February and awarded in July. The cost should be in the range of \$500,000 to \$850,000 and may involve more than one related project. Unlike other contract processes, the individual making the proposal can invite contractors to respond to the announcement requests, attend the Study Section meetings as an observer, be involved in the selection process for the contract award, and act as the project officer with the authority to establish interim deadlines and bench marks.

9. NIH and NHLBI New Performance Appraisal Systems - NIH has approved a new system which will be initiated this year. A near-final draft of the proposed NHLBI system has been distributed to every GS or WG employee for review. The current system will be replaced by a two-level system: "acceptable" or "unacceptable" performance. In order to implement this new system, it may be necessary to revise many position descriptions (PD) because the new appraisal elements will be derived directly from the PD. All appraisal elements will be "critical" and performance must be acceptable for all elements to obtain an overall rating of acceptable. Performance awards will no longer be directly linked to the annual appraisal period but will be given throughout the year as appropriate for the individual award. Thus, there will be more opportunities to reward deserving employees with cash awards than in the past.

All employees have been asked to comment on the plan and comments should be submitted to Dr. Korn by April 26th so that he may send a consolidated response to the NHLBI committee that will prepare the final plan. If it seems desirable to do so, a meeting of all DIR employees will be held to discuss these new programs.

10.Sponsored Travel (348s) Update - Carroll Hanson reminded attendees that the HHS 348 for sponsored travel will not be forwarded to Bldg. 31 unless there is an attached copy of a letter from the traveler to the sponsoring institution which includes a statement that reimbursement must be made in the form of a check made out to NHLBI.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 13 AT 3:00 PM - 7S235